

The German Racial Policy

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EDITOR'S NOTE

This article is reprinted from the March-April, 1936, issue of *Eugenical News*. It is published here for the same reason it was printed originally—to get the true facts about the German racial policy—which even 37 years ago were being obscured by propaganda.

IT IS UNFORTUNATE that the anti-Nazi propaganda with which all countries have been flooded has gone far to obscure the correct understanding and the great importance of the German racial policy. The German nation has adopted a policy of biological improvement in its racial quality as its major national objective, to which all other objectives are regarded as subsidiary. This national policy seeks to attain the greater purity of racial stocks by selective endogamous mating and breeding, with a clear conception and conviction as to its beneficial effects upon its racial quality and its culture; the increased proportionate reproduction of the more competent eugenic stocks; and the proportionate decrease of the incompetent and undesirable dysgenic stocks.

These objectives do not stop at perfunctory professions, but the most thorough and complete measures have been adopted to secure their maximum realization.

This policy is not the creation of political opportunists designed to flatter national vanity or to engender racial antagonisms, but it is the integration of the well-considered conclusions of its anthropologists, its biologists, and its sociologists, the latter of whom, in contradistinction to many in other countries, take full cognizance of the biological basis of collective life. No earnest eugenicist can fail to give approbation to such a national policy. Indeed it goes to realize the hopes that eugenicists have entertained for many years, but have despaired of ever seeing adopted in the present generation.

As one of the means of increasing the factual knowledge upon which this policy needs to be based, the Herculean task has been undertaken of recording the sixty odd million pedigrees of the entire German nation, and over 600,000 of such pedigrees have already been so taken, verified, and filed by a most admirable and perfect system. These pedigrees not only take account of the propositus but of his parents, grandparents, and near kin, and they record sufficient data to indicate the racial, physical, and mental status of every individual.

It is obvious that such a stocktaking of what is to be considered as a nation's primary and most valuable asset is of itself of incomparable value. It will not only enable the nation to evaluate this

asset from year to year and to note the progress of its measures for racial improvement, but it will be invaluable as a guide both in attaining racial purity and in breeding out undesirable racial traits. Moreover the analyses and correlations that can be made of this great mass of human data will inevitably lead to findings of the greatest service in expanding the knowledge of breeding conditions, and in making constant improvement in this policy.

Naturally this policy recognizes that the racial future of a nation depends upon its rural population, because urban populations steadily tend to extinction through an insufficient reproduction to sustain their numbers, whereas rural populations more than reproduce themselves and thus constitute the ancestry which will determine the racial quality of future generations. This basic fact has long been recognized by eugenicists, but the announcement of it has fallen upon apathetic ears.

Conserving Rural Population

It is however taken as the basis of the German racial policy, and the primary effort of this policy is to employ every possible means of conserving a virile and able rural population, of securing its prosperity and ameliorating its conditions and increasing its amenities, of encouraging reproduction in its better stocks and the enhancement of its racial purity.

Recognizing that a family stock takes its first step toward extinction when it severs its connection with the land, every effort is made to secure the permanent habitation of a homestead by its own scions from one generation to another. And such family homesteads cannot be alienated by foreclosure or by other means.

Those who have been persuaded to think that this racial movement is a childish effort to assert the superiority of the Germanic racial stock will be edified to learn that small groups of the old pre-Germanic Keltic racial stocks in various

parts of Germany are regarded as highly valuable racial stocks, and every effort is made to preserve these Keltic groups and to foster their racial purity. This may well be, since there is no better and finer peasantry in Germany.

A well-considered plan has been put into effect to create conditions which will encourage the more desirable racial elements to have larger families, such as an adequate addition to the parental stipend for each child born, the remission of taxes in proportion to the number of children, the discrimination in employment in favor of parents of such families, and discrimination in favor of such offspring by means of educational advantages and by placing them in positions. For example, such parents who may have six children are exempt from income tax up to 30,000 marks a year. Childless adults on the other hand pay an income tax beginning at 15%. This discrimination however is not based upon any punitive principle, but rather upon the relative compensation to individuals for their contribution to the prime national asset.

Large Families are Fashionable

But probably the greatest stimulus to having adequate families is the value that is placed upon the amenities of family life, the equal desire to serve the racial interest, and the social approval in which large families are held. Large families can be said to be fashionable in Germany. Where American families desire another motor-car when they can afford it, German families desire another child.

Many in other nations have seemed quite unable to see that the efforts to increase the present German birth-rate could have any other purpose than to produce cannon-fodder for future aggressive designs. But the German racial policy looks a generation ahead and recognizes the fact that the number of children born today inexorably determines the reproductive capacity of the nation twenty years hence when these

individuals will reach the reproductive age. In other words the birth-rate in any year will indicate whether a nation will be increasing or decreasing twenty years afterward. And the German nation places sufficient confidence in those who direct its racial policy that it is disposed to heed their advice.

Sterilization Plan Adopted

Likewise a carefully considered plan of sterilization of dysgenic individuals has been adopted, applying to the feeble-minded, the insane, epileptics, syphilitics, criminals, sexual degenerates, and those with serious hereditary physical affections, in order to diminish and minimize the hereditary transmission of human qualities which go to lower the standard of racial health and well-being. It would be a mistake, however, to assume, as many have done in regard to all sterilization, that such cases are sterilized indiscriminately. Special courts have been set up in Germany which carefully weigh the racial values pro and con in each case, and in which the legitimate individual interest is fully safeguarded. Every case is considered and decided upon its own merits, and there is the further right of appeal.

No one who knows the strict legality that pervades all German court procedure can doubt that these laws will be administered with entire fairness. And the allegations that they would be made a subterfuge for racial discrimination and persecution is only one of the irresponsible and hysterical charges that have been made about this policy.

It has been calculated that there are more than 180,000 people in the German nation that should, and will, be sterilized. In the first year of actual sterilization about 80,000 cases were proposed for sterilization, about 54,000 were classified as fit for it, in about 6,000 it was decided to be unwarranted, and 20,000 remained to be considered. In the United States, on the other hand, in which 28 states now have sterilization

laws and where the desirability of sterilization was first recognized and sanctioned, in twenty years something like 23 thousand cases have been sterilized, about 10,000 of them being in California. The contrast is all the greater when we remember that the population of the United States is twice that of Germany. Thus while many people in the United States are complacent in the feeling that much has been accomplished, they need to recognize in regard to sterilization, as in many other things, that passing laws and obtaining positive results are two quite different things.

The German law is compulsory, and applies both to institutional and extra-institutional cases, both of which features are to be considered as right in principle. Most of American State laws are compulsory, but most all of them only apply to institutional cases, which is obviously wrong in principle although it may be sanctionable on the ground of expediency.

The contention however that compulsory sterilization is wrong in principle cannot hold water. It is an absurdity to maintain that the compliance with laws designed to protect the common interest should merely be voluntary and optional.

Well directed efforts are made to educate the entire nation in all of these vital racial and social subjects by elementary instruction in schools, by many books on different phases of the subject, by bulletins and brochures, and by admirable museum exhibits, in all of which there is universal interest. And practically the whole of the German nation is thoroughly well informed on highly important subjects which in other countries are grossly misunderstood and willfully misrepresented.

Public Cooperation

This policy gains the enthusiastic support and cooperation of practically the entire German nation, of which it may be said that its greatest desire is to make the racial quality of the next generation

an improvement upon that of the present one.

It is at once obvious that such a policy requires the full observance of moral obligations and duties, and that it requires a certain sacrifice of what are regarded by some as inalienable individual rights and of individualistic aims, when they conflict with the racial interest. And it further requires the willingness to submit to disciplines to these ends. But the German nation more than any other nation identifies the Reich, or its government, with the *Volk*, or Race. And in willingly complying with the conditions and regulations of such a national policy, it gladly serves what it believes to be the best interest of the Volk and of the Race.

Indeed the feeling among the German people that they are serving the best future interest of their progeny and of their nation gives them a zest in life and a stimulus to endeavor which enables them to live their lives happily and cheerfully and with a courageous and confident outlook upon the future.

Obligation to Future Generations

Other nations who boast that they seek the maximum freedom and liberty of the individual as the first desideratum in national life incline to condemn such an attitude as a too abject docility in individuals. They might with profit, however, bring a little rationalization to bear upon their cherished principles of liberty. Most rational individuals in such nations recognize that there are obligations in the common interest which impose justifiable limitations upon personal liberty, to which they willingly submit without any sense of deprivation. The Germans as a nation recognize that these obligations in the common interest go somewhat further, and they are quite happy and content to observe such further obligations in the feeling that their personal liberties are not unduly curtailed. The future will incontestably prove which nations have been the wiser.

It might be asked how this earnest desire of the German nation to improve in its racial quality and in its survival value affects its attitude to other nations. It can safely be said that second only to its desire for its own self-improvement is the wish of the German nation to contribute to the improvement of Western Civilization of which it regards itself as a coordinate member with other Christian nations. Whatever might or might not have been its national attitude at another time, the German nation now recognizes that this can only be accomplished by good will, by good faith, by cooperation, and by peace between nations. And there can be no question but what the German nation is ready, and indeed anxious, to go more than half way in these directions.

Improving Racial Quality

The Germans sincerely wish that other nations should similarly be actuated by patriotic motives to improve their own racial quality. Hence the desire in nations for their biological improvement would not appear to engender an inimical attitude in them to other nations, but quite the reverse.

Thus we have the encouraging example before us of a nation that is intelligent enough to see that its first necessity is the biological one of improving in its racial quality, and thus to augment its survival values; and that has the patriotism, the resolution, and the self-discipline to make every effort toward, and to neglect no means of accomplishing, this end.

Other nations cannot afford to deceive themselves as to the nature of this effort, nor to neglect the practical certainty of its success. If through such self-deception and neglect they permit a progressive deterioration in their own racial quality and survival value, and if in subsequent generations they fall behind and fail in the inescapable competition for racial survival, the present generation could only be deemed to bear a heavy responsibility for such failure.